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Superintendent to retire after years of dedication to her work

See story on page 10

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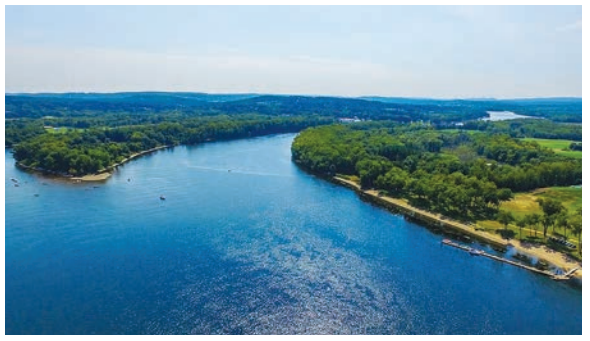

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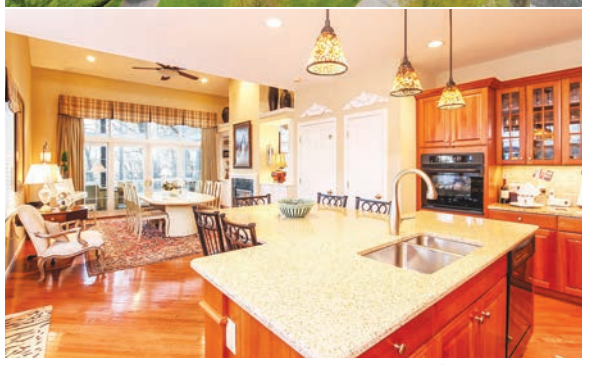

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I'm amazed that you stop people for doing that and they give you a hard time."

- Sgt. Ryan Bengston

See story page 6

ON THE COVER

Dr. Paula Talty is finishing her 20th year as superintendent of Cromwell Public Schools. She will continue to work in leadership studies at Central Connecticut State University.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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LIFE *in the classroom*

Cromwell Middle School offers new and different opportunities in technology

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Photos by Allie Rivera

Riley Arsenault, a 12-year-old student at Cromwell Middle School, used video equipment in the studio.

Students at Cromwell Middle School are preparing for their future, one line of computer code at a time.

Doug Kiss, STEM teacher at the school, is in the second year of teaching coding to his students. He said the experience has been as educational for him as it has been for the youngsters.

"I got asked to move to the middle school three years ago and basically built the program from scratch," he said. "I really was passionate about the idea of getting kids to be computer literate."

CMS students take STEM classes focusing on science, technology, engineering and math for at least one quarter every year, so Kiss sees every student in the building five days a week for roughly nine weeks of the academic year.

"Basically, it's a crash course into computer science," Kiss said. "I had some basic computer programming background so I wanted to break it down to the idea that anyone can learn to do that."

Kiss worked at Woodside Intermediate School and was an active part of the nationwide Hour of Code event prior to teaching at the middle school. In his role at CMS,those lessons in coding are further expanded.

"You come in with the expectation as a sixth-grader that it's this big, difficult thing, so we break it down," he said. "If you can write one line of code, you can write five, and if you can write five, you can write 10."

Since launching the program at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year Kiss said students have excelled beyond his original goals.

"They love it. It's far exceeded my expectations of what I thought it would be like," he said. "In some cases, there are students who have even gone beyond my knowledge."

"If you can write one line of code, you can write five, and if you can write five, you can write 10."

– Doug Kiss

"It doesn't even feel like it's a school subject we're learning about," 12-year-old Julia Drew said. "It's great because it's something that you don't get to do usually."

Kiss said the difficult aspect of teaching STEM is that the world of technology is constantly changing. But that also adds an element of excitement to the subject.

"The exciting and scary thing about STEM is that you have to keep up," he said. "You can't just do the same thing for 10 years, but that keeps the kids excited about it and you feed off of that."

With the growing coding program at the middle school as well as the start of a programming class at the high school, Kiss is proud to be part of a district that provides extensive opportunities for students in technology.

"We're really trying to provide a full curriculum," he said.

He added that this education is also incredibly beneficial for students who will be entering the work force well prepared for the jobs of the future.

"The one field that seems to be growing consistently is computer science, but a lot of schools aren't teaching it," Kiss said.

In addition to the technological education students receive in coding, he also runs the Cromwell Middle School student news.

"Originally the plan was for eighth-graders to only have video production and not coding," he said. "We decided to expand the coding program up and make video production more of an elective for eighth-graders."

The initial plan was to have interested eighth-graders use the school's small studio space to practice creating news segments, allowing them to learn about recording and editing in a safe space.

"From the beginning, I told them that probably no one is going to see this," Kiss said with a small laugh.

Since then, the student news program has boomed and become an integral part of the school community.

"I said to the teachers, if you have something happening in your class, let us know," Kiss said. "That's when it really grew."

Teachers and students began looking forward to the news segments produced and posted on YouTube and soon watching the news became a weekly event.

"What was exciting about this as it grew was that students started pitching ideas," Kiss said. "Some of the ones they've pitched have become some of our most popular segments."

In addition to the four or five stories they cover every week, the teacher has allowed them the cre-

ative freedom to make their own segments. One student started offering an interesting fact of the week and two others created a short jingle for it.

"Sometimes now you can hear kids singing that jingle through the halls, so you know it's being seen," Kiss said. "The news has become way more popular than I thought it would be."

In addition to friends and families being able to take a glimpse into life in the school, he said students have garnered an even larger and unexpected audience.

"We started getting correspondence from a school in Iowa that's also called CMS," he said. "Seeing that gave them a real audience, not only their family and friends, but kids across the country."

As the STEM program at Cromwell Middle School continues to shift and grow, Kiss is grateful to be in a district that supports its students and their technological education.

"Cromwell's got a lot of strengths. We give the students some great STEM opportunities," he said. "I truly feel we're offering them a great STEM experience." **CL**

Students like Julia Drew, 12, learn about coding and video production in STEM classes to prepare themselves for the future.

Cromwell Middle School student Julia Drew, 12, operated the camera as her classmate, Mary Kate Sullivan, 12, sat in front of the green screen in the school's video production studio.

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Keeping roads safe

Photos by Mark Jahne

Officers Kyle Perricone, left, and Jeremy Perlini question a motorist on Berlin Road.

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Police seek out motorists who drive while drunk

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Every police officer knows the carnage a drunken driver can cause. The results often involve property damage and injuries, and sometimes fatalities.

One law enforcement official described drunken drivers as unguided missiles. They are operating a couple of tons of steel with limited control over where it goes.

That's why police departments all over the country have special patrols and checkpoints designed to get these people off the street before they cause a crash. The Cromwell Police Department conducted a special DUI checkpoint on Berlin Road the evening of May 17 not only to take any drunks it found off the road but to remind the public of the need for sobriety behind the wheel.

Sergeants Ryan Bengston and Steven Penn were in command of the eight-man unit. This special enforcement effort was funded by a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration passed through the state Department of Transportation.

"I'm amazed that you stop people for doing that and they give you a hard time."

– Sgt. Ryan Bengston

Bengston said CPD averages four such checkpoints a year, two done on its own and two others held in combination with a combined traffic squad including officers from Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield.

"Some weekends we have a roving patrol," he added.

Road cones were placed in the westbound lane near CVS and Liberty Bank to narrow traffic flow to a single lane. The Cromwell Fire Department loaned a utility truck equipped with an array of lights to help illuminate the area.

It's important for the police to be able to defend in court any arrests made at checkpoints such as this from allegations of racial or other bias. Before the checkpoint was initiated it was determined that a system would be established to determine which cars would be stopped.

"We have a random stop pattern," Bengston said.

It was decided that police would interact with every fifth motorist passing through the checkpoint. This did not preclude them from taking action on other motorists if just legal cause was present.

A cruiser equipped with cameras to scan and read license plates was parked at the beginning of the cones. The scans are automatically run

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through motor vehicle data bases and the officer in this cruiser would radio ahead to alert the others of vehicles that were unregistered or may be operated by drivers with suspended licenses.

Police also used the opportunity to enforce the laws regarding misuse of license plates, seat belts and hand-held cell phones. That includes cell phones being used as GPS directional devices; they can be mounted on the dashboard but they cannot be held while the car is in motion.

Motorists also cannot talk or text with a hand-held cell phone. The idea behind the law is to remind them to pay full attention to their driving. Hands-free devices such as Bluetooth are legal.

"I'm amazed that you stop people for doing that and they give you a hard time," Bengston said.

Everyone they interacted with was offered an immediate explanation of the checkpoint.

Bengston said that each driver was asked the same three questions.

- How are you this evening?
- Where are you coming from?
- Have you had anything alcoholic to drink?

This brief conversation allows police to smell alcohol on a driver's breath. It also allows them to check the person's eyes for clarity and listen to how clearly they speak and if they answer the simple questions with a clear understanding of what was asked.

It wasn't long before they stopped a car that had no front license plate, a violation of state law. The driver was told to pull over into a safe and cordoned off lane.

Shortly after they gave the same instructions to the first of several drivers whose cars were listed as unregistered. Some were only a few weeks past expiration but at least one other was more than a year.

They didn't catch any drunks but that's OK because it meant the hundreds of the motorists who passed through the six-hour checkpoint were fit to drive. But there were a variety of enforcement actions taken.

According to Police Chief Denise Lamontagne, the officers spoke with 364 drivers and 18 were diverted into the testing/investigation area. Police issued nine infractions, three misdemeanor summons, two verbal warnings and one written warning.

No action was taken in the other three cases. Two vehicles were towed from the scene based upon the appropriate enforcement action. CL

This is one of several signs that were displayed to alert the public as to why the road was restricted to a single lane.

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News roundup

Beneficial perspiration

Anytime Fitness Cromwell held a "Sweat for a Cause" fundraiser May 20 during which staff, trainers and members made a donation to the Alzheimer's Association while working out at designated stations. The event raised $2,000.

Air conditioner draws firefighters

Cromwell firefighters responded to a reported electrical fire or odor of electrical burning in a local residence June 11 after the homeowner turned on her central air conditioning unit.

The caller stated that she heard a pop or bang and then noticed an odor in her home at 23 Magnolia Court.

The Cromwell Fire Department was alerted at approximately 1:10 p.m. by the resident, who became concerned of a possible fire.

No sign of fire or smoke was evident upon the arrival of initial responding units. Further investigation revealed an odor similar to burning electrical equipment with an associated haze on the first and second floors.

Firefighting personnel using a thermal imaging camera eventually traced the cause to a central air conditioning unit located on the roof.

They found that a short circuit or other type of electrical malfunction was the culprit, so power was shut to the errant equipment until it could be repaired.

Music comes to Covenant Village

Connecticut's Hop River Chamber Music Players will perform at 7:30 p.m. July 18 at Covenant Village of Cromwell, 52 Missionary Road. This free performance is open to the general public. Registration is required by calling 877–236-0875 or visiting covenantvillageofcromwell.org. **CL**

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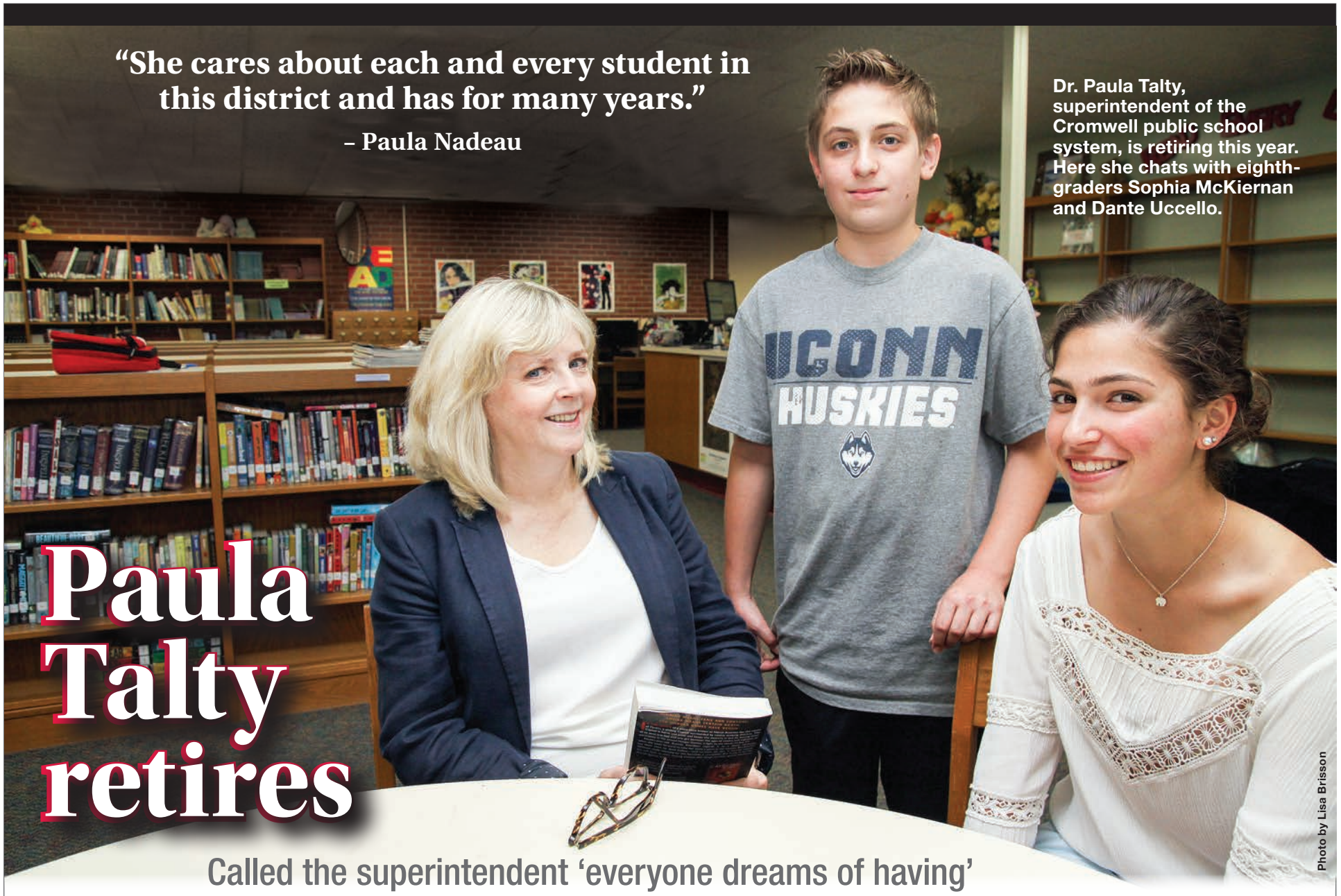

"She cares about each and every student in this district and has for many years."

– Paula Nadeau

Dr. Paula Talty, superintendent of the Cromwell public school system, is retiring this year. Here she chats with eighth-graders Sophia McKiernan and Dante Uccello.

Photo by Lisa Brisson

Paula Talty retires

Called the superintendent 'everyone dreams of having'

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Beginning this summer, a new face will be leading the Cromwell Public Schools. After nearly 38 years in education, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paula Talty is retiring.

"It really was time for me to go," Talty said. "A lot of things just seemed to align."

A native of Massachusetts, she began her teaching career shortly after graduating from Worcester State University with a degree in elementary education. She immediately began working with an underserved population of children.

"I began my career working with migrant workers' children," she said. "I did Title I reading for a time."

Shortly thereafter, at the age of 25, Talty decided to move to Connecticut, where she has lived ever since. Her first teaching job in the state was at Andover Elementary School in Andover.

After spending time in the classroom, she took her first administrative position in Cromwell as director of curriculum around the same time that she earned her doctoral degree.

"I never saw myself leaving the classroom," she said. "I figured out, though, that in this position, I can help teachers in a different way. I can do more for the kids and the teachers as an administrator. I never intended to become superintendent."

While she was happy to be moving into this new position, Talty admitted that the choice to leave the classroom was a difficult one.

"I actually went through a grief process leaving the classroom," she said. "That was hard for me, to leave these relationships that you've built."

Talty took that commitment from her time as a teacher and brought it to her role as an administrator.

"She cares about each and every student in this district and has for many years," said Administrative Assistant Paula Nadeau, who has worked at Talty's side for nearly 18 years.

It was that commitment to the students and staff that led Talty after five years as director of curriculum to rise to assistant superintendent, a position she held for six years. She has served as superintendent for the past four years.

"I believe the people in the community should know who the school superintendent is. I believe teachers should see the superintendent in the buildings," Talty said. "You really have to put in that effort."

Those efforts have not gone unnoticed for those who have worked with her.

"She is the superintendent everyone dreams of having: committed, supportive, caring and effective," Lucille DiTunno, principal of Edna C. Stevens School, said. "She is a strong leader that always supports the growth of the whole child."

It is not the work that she has done but the combined efforts of the students, staff and community at large that Talty feels have made her time here such a success.

"We have so many really wonderful kids who do so much. I realized that in Cromwell what was needed was to bring the community into the schools," she said. "That's been my big accomplishment. I really do see the schools as being the heart of the community."

She is proud of the accomplishments she has helped to oversee including a partnership between the high school and Covenant Village of Cromwell, the growth of the district's preschool program and the creation of a systematic process for curriculum review. Mostly, however, she is proud of the work of the district's students and staff.

"We've created opportunities for students to be more involved, we've seen our teachers going out and presenting at conferences," she said. "Sometimes you need to just back up and enjoy it."

Talty is also confident in Assistant Superintendent John Maloney, who will be taking over her position. She is certain that Maloney is

prepared for the difficulty of the job.

"He's been a great partner for me," she said. "I'm leaving the district in great hands. Being superintendent is very intense. It's 24/7 and you're never off. You do worry about the well being of every staff member and every kid, but there's a lot to enjoy here."

She has accepted a one-year position at Central Connecticut State University but after that she does not have specific plans.

"I'll probably be doing some rowing this summer," she said.

Most likely, Talty will use her new-found time to discover new activities, a challenge she had given herself years ago.

"Every year since I turned 50 I said I would try to learn something new that's outside of my comfort zone," she said.

That commitment has brought her to discovering fencing, ballroom dancing, cooking, rock climbing and even learning to ride a motorcycle.

"She's always trying to better herself and learn new things and incorporate new things into the district and into her life, which I think is a greatly quality," Nadeau said.

Talty also hopes to spend more time traveling around the world. She has already seen Santa Fe, Quebec and Paris, among others.

"I loved Paris," she said. "I loved the art. I loved being able to just gorge myself on all this beautiful art."

She hopes some day to view the pyramids of Giza in Egypt.

"Oh, and I'd love to go to Iceland. And Norway," she said. "Those are all on my bucket list."

For those who know her best, Talty's retirement will not only mean the loss of an excellent leader, but also a friend.

"We've become very close. We've developed such a rapport where we can finish each other's sentences," Nadeau said. "I'll just be missing having that kind of interaction."

Talty said her retirement is bittersweet but she hopes that she has left a positive mark on the Cromwell community.

"I think it's important for people to know I'm passionate about my work," she said. "I feel like I've accomplished what I set out to accomplish." **CL**

Courtesy photo

After nearly 38 years in the field of education, Dr. Paula Talty is retiring as superintendent of the Cromwell Public Schools.

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera

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Golf tournament benefits children with autism

More than 100 golfers participated in an annual golf outing at the Lyman Orchards Golf Course in Middlefield to support Ädelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services in Cromwell. The organization, which has residential services for children on the autism spectrum, was formerly known as the Children's Home and shifted its focus to children with autism roughly five years ago. Money raised by this event will help fund new playground facilities.

1. Row after row of golf carts descended onto the course as the tournament began. **2.** Trevor Sanchez, left, and Toren Murphy enjoy helping a good cause. **3.** President and CEO Garrell Mullaney, second from right, was at the front table to greet golfers including, from left, Mackenzie Tyson, Noemi Kearns and Ted Kearns. **4.** Adelbrook CFO Dave Maibaum, center, prepares to take to the course with his son William, right, and friend Augusto Russell. **5.** Chad Huff, assistant golf professional at the Lyman Orchards Golf Course, greets the golfers. **6.** The sunny day was perfect for Ann and Howard Burgoyne. **7.** Jeff Gibson, Chuck Everett, Tom Scalise and Ron Licata, from left, teased each other as they prepared to take on the course. **8.** Sharon Graves, left, the director of community engagement and person in charge of the tournament, spends a moment with Heide Perham, director of marketing and communications. **9.** Nicole Desroches, Jeff Swanson, Michelle Ighani, Julie Piepenbring and Todd Rofuth, from left, were all smiles before the tournament began.

Student of the month

Aden Bakayoko is described as a model student

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Few people can say they have established a career in the modeling world. Even fewer have done so before finishing second grade.

Seven-year-old Aden Bakayoko is a student at Edna C. Stevens School who just finished that grade. His life often brings him to New York City where he has worked as a model for the last three years.

"He does a lot of print work and he just did a Yoplait commercial," his mother, Michele Comerford, said, listing other credits with Crayola, Toys 'R' Us, J. Crew and Gymboree, among others. "When they call, we go. The year before last we went 52 times."

Aden's life has become a balancing act between Cromwell and New York.

"He's got great balance," Comerford said. "He knows when it's time to work and he works. He works with these directors and photographers like he's an adult."

His favorite part of the trips into the city is after the work is done and he and his family get to spend time experiencing New York.

"I get to go to the park sometimes," he said excitedly.

"After he works, we get to have a fun experience," his mother added.

Back in Cromwell, Aden is content to be a regular child. His favorite parts of the school day are math and recess where he and his friends play a game called Wall Ball.

"You bounce the ball against a wall and if you drop it you have to run to the wall before they throw it," he said.

He enjoys playing these kinds of games outside with his friends and loved participating in the school's recent Field Day.

"I like when we were playing with the big parachute," he said.

Outside of school, Aden stays active by playing ice hockey at Champions Skating Center and basketball through the town's team.

"I just decided to give it a try," he said of his decision to start hockey. "My favorite part is learning how to stop when I'm skating."

He hopes to continue playing hockey in the coming years.

Aden began playing basketball for the first time this year after learning about the sport while playing at home with his father. While he and his teammates typically play on a half court, they recently had the chance to see what it's like to play with more space.

"My last game, I played on the full court," Aden said. "It was a lot harder."

This past year he attended Camp Eagle Feather, a summer camp in Rocky Hill that provides swimming, field games and other activities. At the end of the experience, Aden was honored with the Chipmunk Award for his kindness and humility.

"He's always very humble," second grade teacher Renee Kucharski said. "Even in class, he never brags about his modeling or makes a big deal about the days when he gets to leave early."

Kucharski said Aden has proven himself to be a motivated and creative student.

"He's come very far and works really hard in his reading," she said. "He's definitely also very creative. I love when he comes back from art class seeing what he has made."

That creativity extends beyond the classroom. According to his mother, Aden is known to create new inventions out of materials he finds around the house.

"We order duct tape by the dozen," Comerford said with a laugh.

During his free time, he enjoys spending time in his family's pool, sometimes with younger sister Emerson, 6. This summer he is looking forward to spending three weeks visiting his grandparents in West Africa with family.

Despite all that he has already accomplished in his seven years, those who know him best said it is Aden's kindness and humility that make him stand out among his peers.

"He's always a great friend," Kucharski said. CL

"He never brags about his modeling or makes a big deal about the days when he gets to leave early."

– Renee Kucharski

Photo by Allie Rivera

Aden Bakayoko, 7, is a student, athlete and professional model who frequently travels to New York City for his work. Those who know him best say it is his kindness and humility that make him stand out.

"People are asking me if they can go again and telling me that they loved hearing these stories."

– Holly Hollander

Taste and Talk Together

Program partners students and senior citizens for food and reflection

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Four years ago the data on students in Cromwell defined as living in poverty was at 20 percent. In the time since then, it has increased to 22 percent, but members of the community refuse to sit back and ignore those numbers.

"When I heard this, I said, how can there be that much poverty in Cromwell?," Ann Grasso said.

She is a resident and community partner at Covenant Village of Cromwell, a senior living community. Grasso learned these statistics from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paula Talty, who made it a mission to meet with clergy and community leaders when she began her job.

What soon came out of this concern was the Taste and Talk Together (TaTT) program.

"My initial idea with this was to feed kids," Grasso said. "I went to the head of dining at Covenant Village and she was all over it."

Grasso and Talty soon formed a partnership to make TaTT a reality and in the three years since the program began it has shifted and grown beyond what either had imagined.

"Other things have blossomed from this seedling to be much more far-reaching than originally thought," Director of Teaching and Learning Holly Hollander said on behalf of the Cromwell Public Schools.

TaTT takes interested freshmen from Cromwell High School to Covenant Village of Cromwell to share a full meal. The program partnered with Sodexo, the food services company at Covenant Village that agreed to provide all of the meals free.

"Every freshman in our Freshman Academy gets a slot," Talty said. "Beforehand, they get an orientation of the experience itself and we arrange the transportation."

Photo courtesy of Ann Grasso

Students from Cromwell High School and residents at Covenant Village of Cromwell come together throughout the year for Taste and Talk Together. It's a program that allows the groups to share life stories over a three-course meal.

Grasso sees the beauty of the program in its simplicity. High school students and senior citizens share a three-course meal with phones and other technology put away. Despite that simplicity, Hollander, Talty and Grasso all said they had people coming to them and expressing their concern before participating, including the seniors.

"The first year, we had residents who were literally frightened of having the kids come," Grasso said. "What I love is sitting in the dining room and everyone's trying very hard to be proper, but then by the first course they're all leaning back and relaxed and chatting."

"Everyone's kind of nervous," Hollander added. "We give them topics to talk about and topics to avoid. We really are trying to make an unnatural partnership as comfortable as possible."

Though the students and seniors were often nervous, the outcome was positive. Hollander, who now leads the program, conducted several surveys with students after their interactions and found that of the 30 questioned, 28 said they wanted to participate in the program again.

"People are asking me if they can go again and telling me that they loved hearing these stories," Hollander said. "It's really been such a success."

In addition to providing an enjoyable and educational space during the program, some people involved with TaTT have taken their new intergenerational friendships beyond the Covenant Village dining room.

"What ended up coming out of that is that it's become so much more," Talty said. "They'll come to our basketball games or our plays. Another group was formed and they do the judging for our Invention Convention."

"Our students are part of their community and their residents are part of our community," Hollander added.

What started as a way for community members to help feed students in poverty has expanded to become a program for all interested students to form relationships with others.

"There's that feeling of a need for intergenerational connection," Talty said. "That's been a real thread throughout everything we've done together."

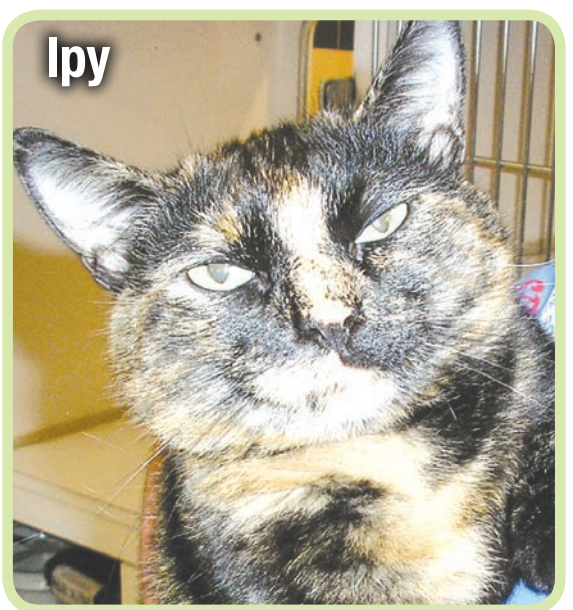
The program ran 10 times throughout this recently ended academic year, each time with an entirely new set of students. Grasso and Hollander are excited to continue running Taste and Talk Together as a way for students to learn and grow from the older members of the community.

"I feel strongly that this is important and so beneficial to our students," Hollander said. **CL**

Covenant Village of Cromwell is located at 52 Missionary Road. It can be reached at 860-635-2690 or covenantvillageofcromwell.org.

a new leash on LIFE

Meet Chino and Ipy



Ipy is a female domestic shorthair and about a year and a half old. Her preferred home would be with children who have some understanding of cats and are over the age of 8. No dogs, please; other cats might be OK. She has some special needs but also a lot of love to offer. A CHS adoption counselor can provide additional details. **CL**

Chino is a 4-year-old neutered male pit bull who is looking to live in a single-family home, condominium or apartment. Children should be 12 or older. He has no prior experience with other animals but is willing to give it a try. Chino has lots of energy and needs to get exercise every day. He has a great deal of potential and would do best with a family that has prior experience with high-energy dogs.

Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

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Bite by bite

Eating mindfully is about more than what goes into your mouth

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Do you ever find yourself looking at an empty pint of ice cream or candy wrapper and wondering just where it all went? In our technologically connected, go-go-go world, it can be challenging to slow down enough to really experience what we're eating.

Mindfulness guru Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, has an exercise where he has students eat a single raisin, a process that can take several minutes.

"I love Jon Kabat-Zinn's definition on mindfulness, 'Bringing awareness to the present moment without judgment.' I find it can be most helpful to utilize our five senses to do this. In today's society teeming with technology, mindfulness is more important than ever. When we are mindful, we have a much better chance of determining what we need. This is so important with mindful eating. So many folks start tearing open their large family-size bags of chips or cookies and begin the mindless pursuit of shoveling one chip or cookie into their mouths with little recognition of this behavior. Only when the bag is empty, do they realize what they have done," Theresa Nygren, LCSW of The Mindful Self-Compassionate Way in Farmington, said.

"Mindful eating is a wonderful practice to notice the hunger and then determine what the body really craves. During mindful eating, attention is paid to the taste, texture and colors of food. Eating mindfully naturally allows the body to sense when it has had enough, which can help reduce the amount consumed. In our previous groups, participants are always surprised that when eating mindfully, they even tend to leave something on their plate. They have a much easier time determining when they have reached a comfortable place of fullness and can push away from the table before becoming overly stuffed."

It's also about being conscious of what it took to get the food to your plate.

"Before eating begins, bring recognition to all of the hands that were involved in getting this food to your plate. These include the growers, truckers, supermarket folks, etc.," Nygren noted.

Mindful eating doesn't have to be a formal program. It can simply be a more conscious way to look at food.

"Mindfulness is being present in the moment and fully aware of what you are doing and why. Mindful eating is the basis of a healthy relationship with food. It is paying attention to not only what you are eating, but how much, how fast and why. It is fully enjoying the tastes and smells of the food, and eating to nourish the

body. When beginning to eat more mindfully, one must slow down and make eating an activity separate from all others. Mindful eating is eating when you are truly hungry, not stressed, upset or bored, and stopping when you are satisfied, not stuffed or sick," Jacqui Campbell, MS, RD, CDN, of Bordeaux Nutrition LLC in Newington, explained.

"Mindless eating is what happens when we are rushed and eating on the go, or when we sit down in front of the TV after a stressful day. This often leads to making poor food choices, overeating and the myriad of health effects that come with those choices," Jackie Stevenson, DTR, also of Bordeaux Nutrition, added.

"Mindful eating is focusing on the food and enjoying it, chewing slowly, pausing in between bites, and listening to your body to fullness cues and how specific foods make you feel. Eating more mindfully can bring more joy to this daily activity, and, by listening to your body, will help you naturally maintain a proper weight and improved health."

Truly eating mindfully can be a challenge, so you may want to start incrementally.

"Start with something small like a snack or cup of coffee. Try not to be reading the paper when you're doing that to see how different it feels. What we're trying to do is slow people down," Sharon Gutterman, Ph.D., of Mindful Wow! in West Hartford said. "Other things that help people slow down are to put your fork down between bites or to try eating a meal with chopsticks. Slowing down helps us with savoring and, when we begin this, we can pay attention to when we really are full. Otherwise, it's as if we haven't eaten."

Eating with your non-dominant hand is another technique to try.

"When we eat really in the present moment – you can't eat in the past, you can't eat in the future – all the senses can be engaged right now in this present moment. You can't do this every single time with every single thing we eat," Gutterman said. "It's helpful to be aware, smelling our food, tasting our food, hearing the crunch of the food, savoring the flavors. Having gratitude for this food and how it came to us, for the sunshine and the rain, the growers and the truckers, the package designers, the food, to me then becomes elevated from an ordinary experience to something quite extraordinary."

Nygren noted that the process of eating mindfully begins before you even sit down for a meal.

"In order to experiment with eating more mindfully, it is probably best to select one meal a day to practice this new behavior, perhaps selecting a meal where there is a bit more time to slow things down. Before meal time begins, it can help to notice on a scale of one to 10 of how hungry you are. Is it the clock that signals it is time to eat? Or is it your stomach that is growling with the beginning signal of needing some fuel for your body? If you are eating according to clock time and can put off eating until true hunger shows up, give more time for your body to guide you.

"Our bodies hold the wisdom, but we as a society are often so disconnected from the messages while at the same time having an inner dialogue attacking our bodies in some ways. The litany goes like this, 'How did I ever get so fat? I hate my belly. My thighs are enormous. My stomach is disgusting.' You get the picture. Befriending our bodies is so important in this process of becoming more mindful," she said.

"So, once you are tending to true hunger, arrange a plate with a colorful array of whole foods. Then notice how your food looks. As you take your first bite, really enjoy the burst of flavors as you slowly chew this mouthful of food. Is it salty, sweet, sour?

"Placing the fork down between bites can help facilitate this mindful practice. Perhaps while your fork rests on the table, it would be a good

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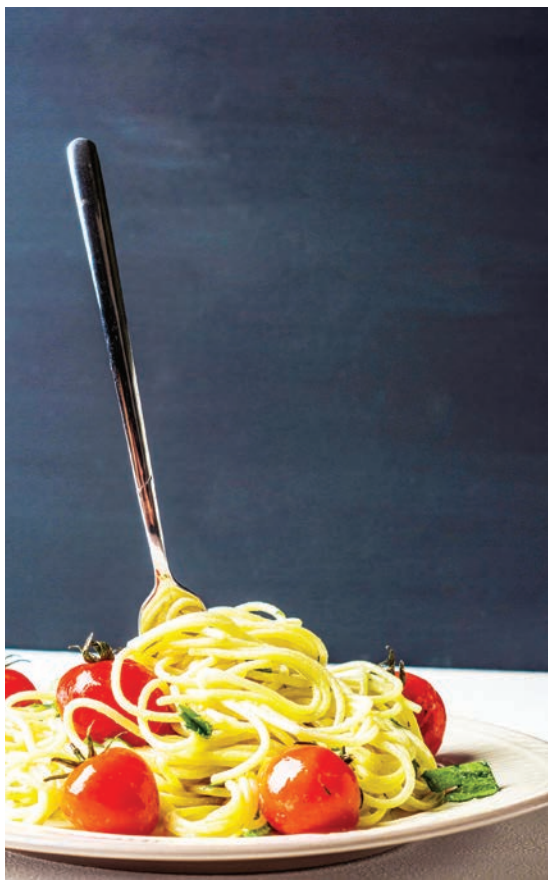
– Jackie Stevenson



time for a deep belly breath," she continued. "As you consume your meal, keep checking in with your belly regularly to see if it is signaling it has had enough. Can you pause when you get this signal? So many Americans just keep on eating until their plates are clean as a whistle. Let your stomach be your guide. Eating in this fashion can aid digestion, release weight and increase a positive frame of mind."

And mindfulness – and its benefits – reach far beyond the dining room table.

"Living mindfully to me is about being as aware as I can to what's going on within and around me. As an example, this morning when I was walking, I spontaneously began to say to myself, 'Right now, I feel the sun on my head. I feel this cold breeze. I can tell my legs know how to walk and I am grateful for that.

"My haircut feels so good. Am I satisfied? And that's huge for me to ask. Right now I am smiling.' It's coming back to what my senses and thoughts and feelings are telling me right now," Gutterman explained.

She noted that many people live in the future, worrying about the "what if." Others ruminate about the past, focusing on the "if only."

She said that living mindfully helps us be cognizant of those patterns.

"When I'm aware I'm somewhere not wholesome or healthy or doing me much good," she said, "I just remind myself what I have is breathing moment to moment." **TBM**

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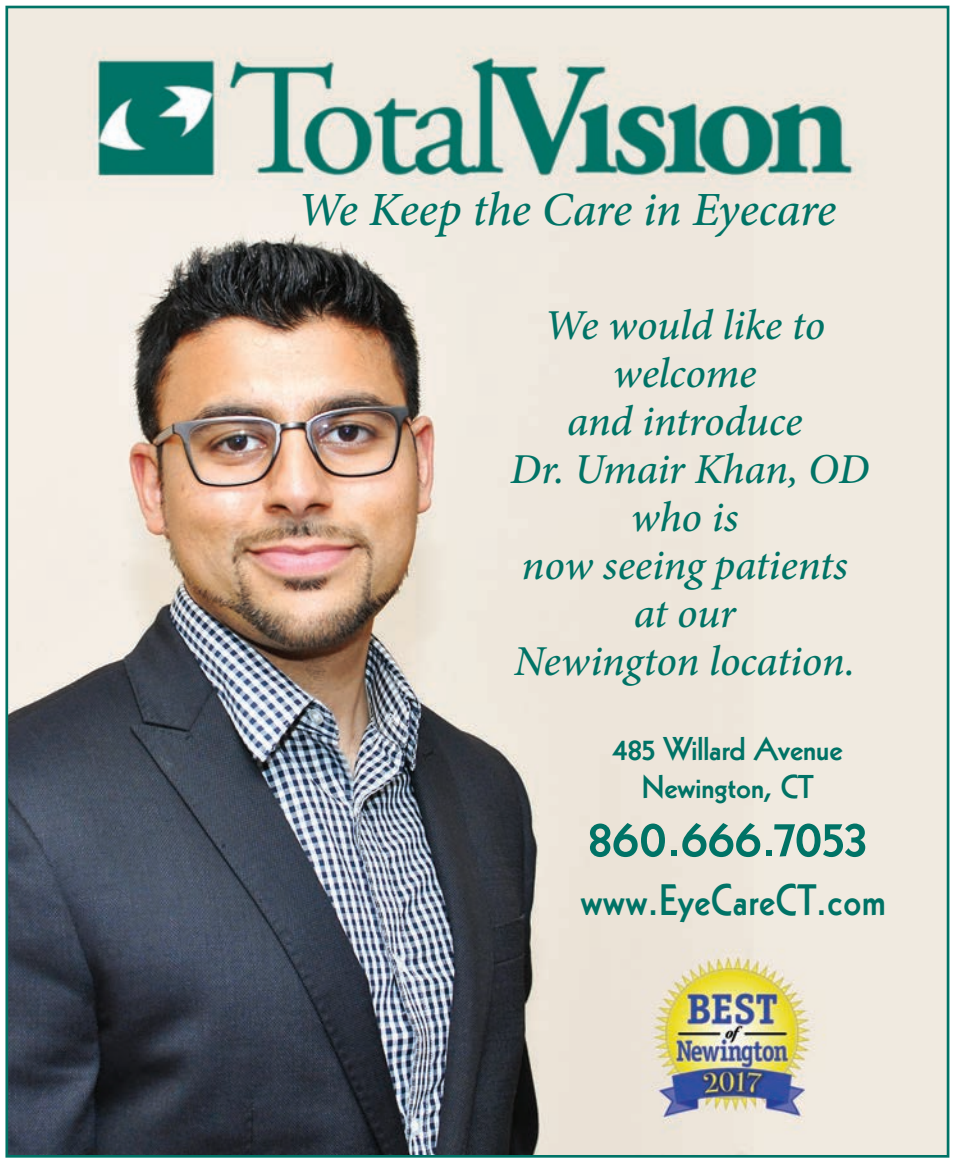
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Did you know?

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, certain factors make women more likely than men to develop osteoporosis, a bone disease that occurs when the body loses too much bone, produces too little bone or both.

One such factor is that women tend to have smaller, thinner bones than men. Another reason women are more vulnerable to osteoporosis than men concerns the hormone estrogen. Estrogen is a hormone in women that serves many functions, one of which includes protecting bones. Production of estrogen decreases sharply when women reach menopause, the period in a woman's life when she ceases menstruating.

The National Institute on Aging notes that the average woman has her final period at age 51. Once women reach menopause, the accompanying decline in estrogen production can cause bone loss.

This is one reason why women's risk for osteoporosis increases after menopause and why recommended intake of calcium and vitamin D, both of which can help women prevent osteoporosis, is different for women age 50 and below than it is for women age 51 and older.

Music may have the ability to soothe, heal and inspire physical activity.

How music may improve health

Plato said, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." Music often communicates messages that are not easily expressed, which is one reason why music is such an integral part of so many people's lives.

While many people love music for its entertainment value, there is growing evidence that music can be good for overall health as well. A study from researchers at the Cleveland Clinic focused on the use of music for brain surgery patients who must be awake during their procedures. Researchers found that music enabled the patients to manage anxiety, reduce pain and relax more fully during their procedures.

In a study titled, "The effect of music intervention in stress response to cardiac surgery in a randomized clinical trial," a team of Swedish researchers measured serum cortisol, heart rate, respiratory rate, mean arterial pressure, arterial oxygen tension, arterial oxygen saturation, and subjective pain and anxiety levels for patients who had undergone cardiothoracic surgery.

Those who were allowed to listen to music during recuperation and bed rest had lower cortisol levels than those who rested without music.

Many doctors now play music while operating or enable patients to listen to music to calm their nerves during in-office procedures.

According to Caring Voice Coalition, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of patients with chronic illnesses, music has also been shown to enhance memory and stimulate both sides of the brain, which may help individuals recover from stroke or those suffering from cognitive impairments.

Music also can have a positive impact on mood.

Neuroscientists have discovered that listening to music heightens positive emotions through the reward centers of the brain.

Music stimulates the production of dopamine, creating positive feelings as a result.

Some researchers think that music may help improve immune response, promoting faster recovery from illness. Undergraduate students at Wilkes University measured the levels of IgA — an important antibody for the immune system's first line of defense against disease — from saliva. Levels were measured before and after 30 minutes of exposure to various sounds, including music. Soothing music produced significantly greater increases in IgA than any of the other conditions.

Another way music has been linked to improved health is its ability to make physical activity seem less mundane.

Listening to songs can distract one from the task at hand, pushing focus onto the music rather than the hard work being done. When exercising, upbeat music can help a person go a little further as they work to achieve their fitness goals than working out without music.

The benefits of music extend beyond enjoying a favorite song, as music can do much to contribute to one's overall health. TBM

Healthy in a minute

Quick tips for living strong

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Sometimes it can seem hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle. You're busy. You're saturated with so much information, much of it conflicting. Who has the time to schedule in one more thing?

Well, you do! Believe it or not, there are quick and easy steps you can take to improve your health – and you can start right now in as little as one minute. Let's get started:

Stand up

If you're one of the many people who spend their entire workday sitting in front of a computer, here's an easy to-do. According to Jennifer Garza, ScD., ergonomist for UConn Health, taking even one minute per hour to stand up, stretch, move or walk may be beneficial for your health.

"Prolonged sitting is linked to increased risk for disease and death. And, recent studies estimate that physical inactivity contributes to more than 300,000 deaths annually in the United States," she said.

"There is some good news, though. Evidence suggests that alternating between sitting, standing and moving throughout the day may reduce back pain and promote better cholesterol levels and glucose regulation. It may even help you to become more productive."

It really is that simple. While some people opt to use a sit-stand workstation while working on computer-related tasks, Garza cautions against completely replacing sitting with standing.

"Too much standing, which has been associated with pain, fatigue and chronic venous insufficiency, can be just as harmful as too much sitting," she noted.

Rather, try to incorporate movement throughout your day.

"You may consider walking to a printer or bathroom farther away than the ones you normally use; talking with a colleague in person instead of sending an email or text; taking the stairs instead of the elevator; holding walking meetings; or starting a group stretching or exercise class," she suggested.

And more is definitely better. (You knew that.)

"If possible, try to incorporate at least three to five minutes of movement into every hour," Garza said. "However, even one minute less sitting per hour can help you to feel healthier, more comfortable and more productive."

And don't think that movement during the day is your free pass for binge watching in the evening.

"It is definitely worthwhile to keep the same principles in mind when using the computer, watching TV, or doing other sedentary activities during leisure time," Garza noted.

While watching TV, use the built-in timer – commercials – as your cue to get up and move.

Exercise

You knew this would be on the list. What might surprise you is that it doesn't take hours in the gym to have a positive impact.

Dr. Randall J. Risinger of Hartford Orthopedic Surgeons PC, which has an Urgent Care Walk-in Center in Avon, suggests stretching every day.

"Hamstring flexibility/stretching is critical to prevent and relieve low back pain and knee pain. It is also one of the best stretches to prevent sports-related lower extremity

injuries. Stretching your hamstrings a few minute a day is a great investment," Risinger said. "Stretching your pectoralis muscles helps posture and, more importantly, can help prevent future shoulder problems," such as rotator cuff repair.

Dr. Alexa Veeder, a chiropractic physician and co-owner of Back to Motion in Newington, noted that even short workouts can pay big dividends.

She has created a quick lower body workout that can be done anywhere. It takes just 10 minutes, or can be done multiple times for a more complete workout.

"These workouts are good for anyone for a few reasons. It targets areas of the body that are important [in] everyday life. It is important to keep full-body workouts incorporated to keep individuals more active and overall strength [goals are] met. Those who do not incorporate full-body functional workouts are at a higher risk to become injured at activities that they like to do as hobbies due to lack of mobility and flexibility," she explained. "Balance is key for injury prevention such as ankle, knee and even low back injuries. By using these exercises on a regular basis, this can improve muscles around the ankles and other important lower body areas to help aid in stability of legs that one may not have developed without proper training."

Veeder, who is a marathoner, certified personal trainer and marathon coach, said that runners will find special benefits when they add in cross-training to their routines.

"Cross-training with strength workouts is necessary to see results for speed. Once you begin to build up core, glutes and accessory muscle strength, you will have a stronger momentum of the primary running muscles which, in turn, will improve overall running time," Veeder noted. "Cross-training accessory muscles is a must to improve speed and will propel you forward."

For training for an event such as a marathon, she recommends running three or four times per week with two or three cross-training strength sessions.

"Listen to your body and know when a rest day is needed," she advised.

Options for full functional body workouts include kettle bells and resistance bands, or simply using your body weight, such as in Veeder's workout below.

Whether you're a runner trying to improve your next race time or just want to be a little faster chasing your kids around the yard, Veeder has a few suggestions for success.

"While performing a squat exercise, make sure to keep upper body squared, shoulders back, and the bending should be from the hips as the back remains erect," she said. "For any squat workout, 45° to 55° in a squat is a perfect angle for working the glutes, quads and hamstrings. Deep squats should only be performed if you have been professionally analyzed by a chiropractic physician to assure proper form is occurring."

It's about making sure the exercise is right for where you are right now.

"Workouts should not be about the amount of weight, but

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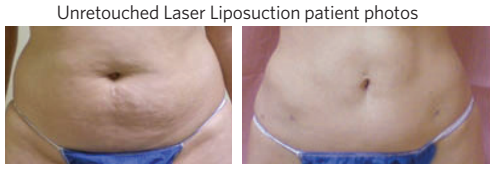

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about the duration and the importance of proper form in order to activate and fatigue your muscles safely and successfully after 60 seconds," Veeder added.

Here is Veeder's 10-minute Total Transformation Squat Workout:

Warm up with butt kick runs in place (four rounds of 60 seconds): 4 minutes

Squat with elbows bent at 90° angle (add weights to increase difficulty): 60 seconds

Plank position while maintaining hips parallel to the floor: 60 seconds

Push-ups (modify on the knees if needed): 60 seconds

Single leg isometric squat (45°-55°) alternating legs (add weights to increase the challenge): 30 seconds each side

Plank position with alternating knees into chest (keeping a flat back): 60 seconds

Walking lunges, forwards and backwards (add weights to increase difficulty): 60 seconds

Wall sits (hold a weight to increase difficulty).

Tip: Make sure your legs are at a 90-degree angle to properly work your quads: 60 seconds.

Have a little extra time? Repeat the entire circuit (sans warmup) three more times; it will take you just over half an hour.

Read to your child

This is an easy action step with benefits for both parent and child.

"If you are the parent of an infant, toddler, preschool or early-school-aged child, you have likely questioned the best way to maximize your child's developmental potential. We live in a world that pushes parents to 'not miss out' on the important window of brain development that occurs in the early childhood years.

"We are bombarded with ads that promote the use of certain products – whether they are vitamins, nutritional supplements, educational games or technology-based learning tools – to ensure we give our children the best chance to succeed in life. Many of these products are expensive, and the number of choices can be overwhelming and stress-inducing for parents. The good news is that with just 20 minutes a day and a trip to your bookshelf or local library you can improve your child's language skills, enhance their brain activity, develop a stronger parent-child relationship and reduce your own stress," Dr. Joy Hong, Prohealth Physicians, Somerset Pediatrics in Glastonbury, said.

Hong said that medical studies have shown that children who are read to at home have more activity in the brain areas that support understanding language and visual imagery. The research is promising for parents, too.

"Parents will also benefit as research done at the University of Sussex shows that reading reduces stress levels by more than two thirds within just six minutes," Hong said, noting an article published in The Telegraph, a British publication.

She said the process starts before you even pick up a book.

"Put away your cell phone! Turn it off, or put it in another room. Turn off the TV. Let your child see you do these things. Undivided parental attention is the most valuable gift you can give your child," she noted.

Next, pick a story that you know your child likes.

"Children thrive on routine. Reading a familiar book is a great way to create a sense of comfort in an increasingly stressful world. Offer a new book or two, but always keep some of the old favorites available. Allow your child to choose the books and the order in which they will be read," Hong recommended.

"Let your child set the pace. Babies and young toddlers may be more interested in eating the book than reading it. That's OK. Preschool age children may jump up and run around in the middle of the book. This is normal. Tracking the words on the page with your finger, pointing at pictures and making funny sound effects are all ways to enhance the reading experience."

Hong recommends carrying the experience of reading beyond the page.

"Talk with your child about things that you have read. Make connections between books and things they see in the world around them," she said. "Nurturing a love of reading is a lifetime gift you can give your child – and it only takes 20 minutes a day." **TBM**

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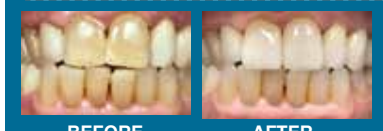
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Feeling overwhelmed?

How to find a good fit for help

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

Change can be exciting and exhilarating, or draining and overwhelming. It is often a change in circumstances that leads an individual to seek ways to adjust and move forward. Sometimes the help of a therapist is needed.

But how? That, too, can be overwhelming, but it does not have to be.

"The most common diagnosis I use in my practice is what is called adjustment disorder diagnosis," Mitch Page, LCSW of Newington, said, adding that while anxiety and depression may be involved what his patients are often struggling with is a life change. This could be a loss of a job, having a baby, losing a spouse, or even adjusting to retirement.

"There is a small number who have truly biological-based illnesses," he said. "It does not mean you are crazy. That is such a terrible term, but even those are triggered by life stressors or life adjustments."

To begin, consider your goal. What do you hope therapy will do for you?

"Once you have a clear sense of that,

Did you know?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity is one of the most important things older adults can do to promote their long-term health.

The CDC recommends that men and women age 65 or older who are generally fit and have no limiting health conditions need at least two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, each week. In addition, such people should perform strength-training activities that work all major muscle groups at least two days per week.

While many fit older men and women with no preexisting health conditions are capable of these activities, those able to push themselves a little further can opt for 75 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, such as jogging or running, combined with the same strength-training regimen.

A combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity coupled with strength training may also provide adequate physical activity for aging men and women.

Before beginning a new exercise regimen, men and women should consult with their physicians to discuss any limitations they may have and how to manage those risks while still being physically active.

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that can guide you to the help you can get," Page said.

When in the midst of an overwhelming life event, it can be difficult to think clearly. However, it could be beneficial to take a deep breath and find help.

"Facing a major life transition or other life issue that the person might benefit from having an objective professional third party's help with" is the best way to know when therapy might be a good option, Elliott Strick, LMFT of West Hartford said.

"These might include loss of a job, ending of a relationship/marriage, death of someone close, assistance with recovery from addiction, all of which might lead to feelings of depression or anxiety that don't get resolved easily or in a reasonable amount of time," Strick said. In other words, it could be, he said, "an emotional problem that is adversely affecting the quality of one's life."

Strick has counseled individuals and couples who are wrestling with infidelity issues, communication within a relationship, the ending of a relationship, those overcoming pain resulting from trauma in the past, or anxiety and depression.

Finding a good fit with a therapist could lead to positive outcomes. However, there are some questions a patient might want to think about before choosing.

Page suggested thinking about whether you would feel most comfortable with a male or female practitioner, or one who specializes in a particular area such as transgender or LGBTQ issues.

"Another consideration, obviously, is finances," Page said. Those who have insurance through their employer may cover the deductibles for a therapist and, in other instances, the provider has a contract with a insurance agency to charge a specific amount.

"I am ethically obligated to charge the contracted fee," Page said.

In addition to questions about finances, gender and location, Strick suggests that patients also discuss the therapist's experience with relevant issues. Once these questions have been thought over, the next step would be to consider how to best approach therapy. Would seeing someone one on one in an office environment be preferable? Or, it might be best to seek a group practice with an MD on staff in the event the medications need to be prescribed. There are also clinical options available and practices specializing in a specific area, such as women's or geriatric issues.

Resources to find a therapist include an individual's own doctor. Page explained that men tend to ask their primary care physician for a referral, while women often ask their OBGYN. Either way, a trusted professional can often make an appropriate suggestion.

In addition, Page said the 2-1-1 Infoline can be helpful.

"They are trained clinicians, not licensed health professionals. They can help you sort through what type of help you need," Page said, adding that they can use a zip code or the name of a town in order to find a nearby therapist.

If possible, Strick suggested interviewing, in person, more than one therapist before making a choice. Additionally, one can ask friends and family members or a primary care doctor. Online profiles on psychotherapy sites can offer some leads. Websites such as goodtherapy.org, psychologytoday.com or therapistlocator.net are good places to start, according to Strick.

Once an appointment is made, Page said patients can expect to discuss in the first session or two what he referred to as a "contract," often in the form of a series of questions: How can I help you? What are you working on? How will you know if I have been helpful? What will be different after three sessions, after eight sessions? In some instances the therapist and patient may have a more formal contract that is signed, otherwise it is a verbal contract so both have a clear understanding of what the goals are for the patient. The goal could be anything from feeling more hopeful, having more energy, or not arguing with your spouse as much.

"You will know after two or three [sessions] if one, you are making progress toward your goal and, two, separate from the goals, you want to make sure the fit is right," Page said.

Ed Federici, LMFT, based in Wethersfield refers to this as fantasy.

"What is the fantasy of what the therapy is going to do for me?" he said.

"I am looking to receive something" from patients Federici said. "That is one of the first questions I ask clients."

From there Federici is interested in finding out what brought the patient in – what they are hoping to get out of therapy.

Additionally, Federici encourages patients to ask themselves questions. Among them are, "What is my hope if therapy goes well? What am I feeling like inside? What are the externals that are different in my life because of therapy?" he said.

Federici recommends patients come in for at least four sessions in order to determine whether or not things are moving in the direction they had hoped.

"Clients come in with their defenses up. That's good, but sometimes we shield the therapy throughout that defense mechanism," Federici said.

"If you still have that same feeling at the third session, then maybe its time, we might not mesh well. I take no offense. This is not working out. I have lots of good colleagues I can refer you to," Federici said.

"I think in the beginning people come in and they are very vulnerable," he said, adding that a patient may also come in feeling very confident.

"Whatever they present, I want to make sure that I am creating a safe place so they can seek the truth," Federici said. "I want to create safety and then after that I want to be able to help them find and access their strength and create that life they wanted or discover the life they want to create; help them find their strength."

Ultimately, seeking help should not make one feel ashamed or embarrassed. "We all go through challenges in life; we feel alone," Page said. "No one should feel shame or embarrassment to meet with someone if they need help or are in trouble."

"We think mental health care is underutilized by the thousands across this country. It's evident in the suicide rate across the country," Page said.

"Get help. It's out there. Everyone needs help once in awhile." TBM

"Whatever they present, I want to make sure that I am creating a safe place so they can seek the truth. I want to create safety and then after that I want to be able to help them find and access their strength and create that life they wanted or discover the life they want to create."

– Ed Federici

The evolving world of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease is one of the most prevalent types of dementia in the world, affecting an estimated 35.6 million people all over the globe, and that number is expected to double in 20 years.

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America estimates that as many as 5.1 million Americans may be living with Alzheimer's disease. Australian company Actinogen Medical says Alzheimer's is Australia's second biggest killer. According to a 2012 study commissioned by the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, 747,000 Canadians were living with cognitive impairment, which included, but was not limited to, dementia.

People with Alzheimer's

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Carbohydrates are seen as the enemy by many people looking to lose weight, but that reputation is ill-deserved for certain types of carbs. Carbohydrates referred to as "smart carbs" can boost energy and mood and help people, even dieters, maintain healthy weights. Smart carbs, which can be found in fruits, vegetables, minimally processed whole grain products such as brown rice and quinoa, and whole wheat bread among other foods, contain vital nutrients and fiber. The body takes longer to absorb whole grains than it does processed carbohydrates, stabilizing blood sugar and energy levels as a result. Because the body takes longer to absorb whole grains, feelings of satiety and fullness are extended. That reduces the likelihood of being hungry again shortly after eating, thereby helping people maintain healthy weights. Those who want to avoid carbohydrates should avoid products made with white flour, such as white bread, non-whole grain pastas, potato chips, and breakfast cereals with high amounts of sugar.

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disease and other types of dementia may experience a decline in mental function severe enough to reduce their ability to perform everyday activities. Some of the cognitive functions that may be impaired include memory, communication and language, ability to pay attention, reasoning and judgment, emotional control and social behavior.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, nor is there an effective long-term way to prevent potential mental decline. However, that has not stopped scores of researchers and medical teams that continue to study the efficacy of different drugs and therapies. The following are some of the more promising options in the works.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, nor is there an effective long-term way to prevent potential mental decline. However, that has not stopped scores of researchers and medical teams that continue to study the efficacy of different drugs and therapies.

Leukine

A safety trial on the drug Leukine already is underway at the Colorado University Anschutz Medical Campus.

"We found, so far, that Leukine is safe in people with Alzheimer's disease," said Dr. Huntington Potter, the director of Alzheimer's research at the university. "That means it doesn't have the side effects that so many other Alzheimer's drugs have had, which are swelling in the brain and bleeding into the brain."

Leukine has been successful in removing the plaque or amyloid along the outside of nerve cells in the brain of mice. Researchers do not know the exact mechanism for removal, but the drug is working and working quickly. Leukine also may be helping the brain repair itself. The Alzheimer's Association has donated $1 million toward financing the costs of the next phase of this trial.

Insulin

Neurologists at Rush University Medical Center are testing a type of insulin that is inhaled through a nasal spray to see if it improves cognition and memory function in people with mild cognitive impairment.

"There is growing evidence that insulin carries out multiple functions in the brain and that poor regulation of insulin may contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease," said Dr. Neelum Aggarwal, a neurologist at Rush and the lead investigator of the study.

The 18-month clinical trial will study the nasal spray versus a placebo in 275 adults between the ages of 55 and 85.

Xanamem

Australian researchers at Actinogen Medical have begun trials of a new drug called Xanamem. More than 170 patients with mild dementia in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom will take part in the placebo-controlled 12-week trial. The medicine blocks the stress hormone cortisol in order to improve mental function for those with dementias. In 2015, an Edinburgh University study of mice showed reducing cortisol in the brain improved their memory and decreased the number of Alzheimer's-associated amyloid plaques in the brain.

Researchers continue to work as they seek a successful, long-term option for treating or preventing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. TBM

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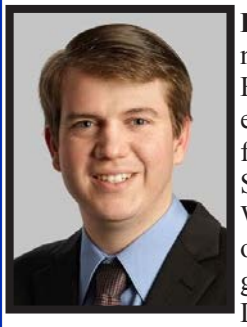
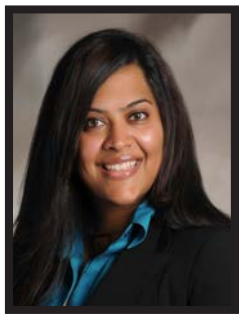
Welcomes W. Bradley Wainright, M.D. & Shivani Reddy, M.D.



Dr. Wainright, a Connecticut native, graduated from Harvard University. He earned his medical degree from the Duke University School of Medicine. Dr. Wainright also completed an ophthalmology residency and glaucoma fellowship at the Duke Eye Center. He will join our practice in August.

Dr. Wainright offers the latest medical and surgical treatments for glaucoma and cataracts, including minimally invasive glaucoma procedures, laser-assisted cataract surgery and advanced lens implants.

Dr. Reddy graduated from the University of Louisville where she also earned her medical degree and completed an ophthalmology residency. Dr. Reddy completed a retina fellowship at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston and will join our practice in October.



Dr. Reddy offers state-of-the-art care of retinal conditions including macular degeneration, diabetic eye disease, and vascular disorders.

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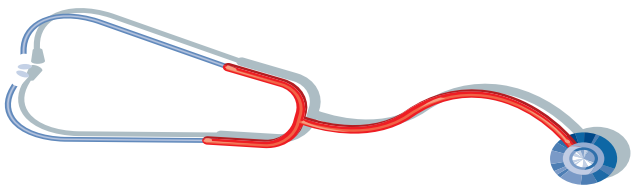
Did you know?

Running on a variety of surfaces instead of sticking to just one surface may help runners reduce their risk of injury. Officials with the USA Track and Field's Sports Medicine and Science Committee recommend that runners vary their runs so they run on pavement, trails and tracks. While it helps to run on various surfaces, researchers do not believe one particular surface is better than another.

In fact, while running on asphalt has long been assumed to increase injury risk because of the presumption that harder surfaces produce greater impact forces on the body, a 2008 study from researchers at the Hannover Medical School Department of Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery in Germany found that running on asphalt surfaces decreased mid-portion tendinopathy risk while running on sand surfaces increased that risk tenfold.



Heart health advice for women

Heart disease may be something most commonly associated with men, but it can be deadly for women as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is to blame for one in every four female deaths in the United States.

Recognizing the threat that heart disease poses is a great first step for women who want to avoid becoming one of the hundreds of thousands of women who lose their lives to heart disease each year. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration offers the following advice to women looking to prioritize their heart health.

Thanks to food labels, it's easier than ever for women to consume heart-healthy diets. When examining labels, look for foods that are low in sodium and sugar. When planning meals, avoid foods that are high in trans fats. In 2015, the FDA ruled that trans fats were not recognized as safe for use in human foods and gave manufacturers three years to remove them from their products. The Cleveland Clinic advises consumers to check labels for partially hydrogenated oils, a hidden source of trans fats.

Certain conditions can increase a woman's risk for heart disease. While women may not be able to turn back the clocks and prevent these conditions from developing, they can take them for the serious threat they are and do their best to manage them. High blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol can increase a woman's risk for heart disease. Take medications as directed, monitor blood sugar levels if you have diabetes, and routinely have your blood pressure and cholesterol tested to ensure any pre-existing conditions are not increasing your risk for heart disease.

The FDA notes that many physicians prescribe aspirin to lower patients' risk of heart disease, clot-related strokes and other problems related to cardiovascular disease. However, there are risks associated with long-term aspirin use that should be discussed with a physician. According to the FDA, bleeding in the stomach, bleeding in the brain, kidney failure and certain types of stroke are some of the potential side effects of long-term aspirin use. Such side effects may never appear, but the risk that they might makes discussing the pros and cons of aspirin well worth it. **TBM**

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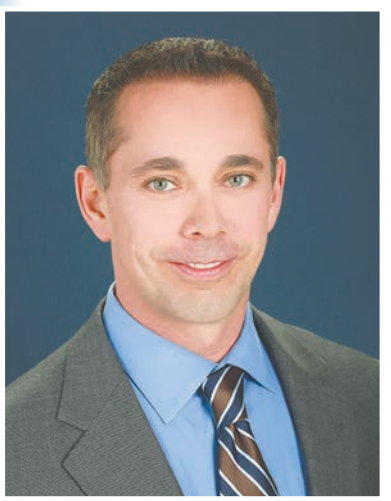

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When to let go

How to give the best love and care to elderly pets

by Nancy Thompson
LIFE Staff

We take them into our homes and our hearts, care for them and love them. And when our pets become old, we worry about them and want to give them the special care they need and deserve.

What should we look for, and how do we help? And, eventually, how can we know when it's time to let them go?

"With older pets, it's the same as with older people," said Stewart "Chip" Beckett, a veterinarian and the owner of Beckett and Associates Veterinary Services in Glastonbury.

"They may not have the ability they used to have, but that doesn't mean they aren't valuable members of the family."

He said there's no doubt about the value of the bond between humans and their pets, citing animals who help people with post-traumatic stress disorder, autism and other special needs. "It's a two-way street," he said. "The relationship may evolve, but it's still a good relationship."

The important issue is how the relationship might be changing. "Animals tell us when they're not enjoying life any more, just like people do," he said. "Are they interested in getting up and seeing us? Are they happy? If they're basically happy, that's great. A lot can be done with management to make old age better."

For example, he said putting rosin on the feet of dogs with spinal arthritis makes their paws sticky and helps with mobility issues. Monitoring an older pet's dental health also is important.

"Dentistry is important," he said. "Abscessed teeth can release bacteria into the bloodstream, and dental disease is the root of a lot of kidney problems. It's an area where people can help."

Better nutrition, an increased awareness of the dangers of letting pets roam outside, and better control of fleas and other parasites have extended the average life span of many pets.

"We have senior diets with less protein and higher fiber, good-quality food with antioxidants and vitamins. We have glucosamine and other medications that offer the same benefits as they do for people. Dogs are living longer," Beckett said.

"When I started in practice, 10 years was a normal life span. Now they're living to 13 or 14 years."

Even with healthier food and better medication, at some point older pets will start to decline. Sometimes that's caused by mobility issues, kidney or heart disease, or other quality of life issues.

"Sometimes there are situations," he said. "A 15- or 20-pound dog is easier to pick up and carry than a 50-pound dog. Sometimes pet owners get to a point when they can't physically or emotionally do it. Some people just can't deal with it."

Others try everything they can to extend their pet's life.

"People's view of death and dying differ," Beckett said. "If you want to spend $30,000 on chemo, surgery and radiation, I can do that, but not if you want to spend $300. People have to ask what their budget is and have a clear idea of what to do."

He said people dealing with a pet with a chronic disease often get in further than they had anticipated.

"Often they try one more thing, then two weeks into it they're doing things they never thought they'd want to do. The vet's job is to tell you what's available, but I can't make the decision for you."

It's a tough decision to end a pet's life, and not one to be taken lightly. "When it's time, make sure everyone's on the same page," he said. "Remember that after we put them down, we can't make them come back."

Kristin K. Haviar, known as "Dr. K" to her clients at the Animal Hospital of Rocky Hill, said it's important for pet owners to look for changes in their aging pets' thirst, eating habits and behavior. She said increased thirst could be a sign of diabetes or kidney disease and recommended calling a vet and having blood work done. Appetite changes could be a sign of hormone imbalance and also could call for blood work.

A decrease in thirst or appetite

Pets and Vets

also can be significant.

"With older pets we see changes at different times of year for no apparent reason," she said. "We see cats, especially older cats, who are constipated. Sometimes they're just not feeling well. Some have diarrhea, others get dehydrated."

She said a decrease in appetite can be a symptom of a variety of issues, including kidney or liver disease and cancer. Haviar said dogs and cats often react differently to not feeling well.

"Cats are quiet," she said. "They sometimes act OK until the problem is severe. Dogs usually let you know."

Haviar said cats tend to get an overactive thyroid that makes them eat a lot of food while losing weight, while dogs, especially bigger dogs, often have an underactive thyroid and put on weight.

Dogs and cats should be checked out by their vet more often as they get older. "The most important thing is to have them seen more often, usually every six months, with blood work at least once a year," she said. Pet owners also should notice issues such as lameness, which might or might not be a symptom of a serious problem.

"Lameness for a day or two might be a soft tissue problem or achy joints, but if it lasts more than a couple of days or is severe it needs to be checked out."

Like people, older pets may experience cognitive issues.

"We're seeing pets live a lot longer," Haviar said. "Some experience cognitive dysfunction. They're awake at night, they become more vocal, and you see them staring into space, but there are supplements to help with that."

For Jacoba Nassar, a veterinarian at the Roaring Brook Veterinary Hospital in Canton, a pet's quality of life depends on a variety of issues, including comfort, its appetite, whether a pet is enjoying its normal routine and whether a pet is having more bad days than good days.

While not something to be taken lightly, she said she believes that euthanasia should be seen as a way for someone to take responsibility for their pet's dignified passing.

"That's the way it should be perceived," she said. "It's a nice option, sort of the next step for treatment, the final treatment. Some say they waited too long. It's so personal," she said of the decision to end a pet's life. "It can't be well defined. It's not just one issue."

Barb Guse, a member of the staff at Veterinary Specialists of CT in West Hartford, is one of a small number of licensed physical therapists in the state who is certified as a canine rehabilitation practitioner and has a different perspective on the aging process in dogs.

"Old age is not a disease," she said. "You can't just say, 'Oh, he's just getting old.' It's important to check with a vet to see if the problem is something that needs to be treated."

She said that, while older dogs may lose strength and flexibility and be unable to do some of the activities they used to do, they can adapt to new routines.

"The owner shouldn't expect them to do the longer walks," she said. "Dogs require daily low-impact exercise, shorter walks, done more often. The owner needs to accept that the dog is aging. Even if they want to do long walks, they shouldn't because they could get hurt. You don't want to ask an older dog to jump into and out of a car or go up and down stairs. It's a safety issue, and it erodes their confidence, big time."

She said owners of older dogs with mobility issues should consider devices such as ramps and steps so their dogs will be confident. "If stairs are an issue, you'll need carpet and have the stairs well lit. Keep their nails trimmed, and if their paws get dry and cracked you can lubricate their pads, which will help them with traction. Keeping their confidence level up will encourage them to stay active."

Guse said that what she does at the clinic is very similar to what physical therapists do with humans, including exercises, treatments with heat and cold, and a water treadmill.

"There are all kinds of things that can be done, and they do so well," she said. They're just the best patients, and it's pretty amazing what we can do for the old guys." **TBM**

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According to the Harvard Medical School, children are likely to get more exercise if they spend time outdoors than they are if they spend time indoors. A study from researchers in England used GPS devices and accelerometers to track the activity of 1,000 children.

The children were more than twice as active when they were outside than they were when they were in inside. When children spend ample time outdoors, that, too, can benefit the environment.

According to the National Institutes of Health, the average youngster spends three hours per day watching television and gets as much as seven hours of screen time each day. When kids are outdoors, they are less likely to be staring at energy-consuming screens and devices than they are when they're indoors.

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Pets and Vets

How to protect your pets from extreme heat

Extreme heat can be unpleasant for anyone, and pets are no exception. While it's easy for men and women to detect if their bodies are responding negatively to heat, those warning signs may not be so prevalent in pets, who may suffer in silence as the mercury continues to rise.

Pet owners must pay special attention to their pets on hot days, which the Humane Society of the United States notes can be both uncomfortable and dangerous for pets. In an effort to help pet owners protect their pets from the summer heat, the HSUS offers the following tips to pet owners who want to keep their pets cool and safe this summer.

• Don't leave pets in a parked car. The temperature inside a vehicle can quickly approach dangerous levels on hot days, so pet owners should never leave their pets in parked cars, even if they leave the air conditioning on and the engine running.

The HSUS notes that on an 85-degree day, temperatures inside cars with slightly cracked windows can reach 102 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. Rather than taking pets with you on car trips, leave them at home inside a comfortably air conditioned room where they won't be vulnerable to rising temperatures.

• Change pet's exercise regimen. Pet owners who make sure their pets get daily exercise should change such routines when temperatures are on the rise. Midday walks or jogs should be switched to evenings or early mornings, when temperatures tend to be at their most moderate.

In addition, cut back on the time spent exercising, as pets may have trouble breathing on hot days.

When taking your dog for a jog or a run in the summertime, do so on the grass, avoiding asphalt, as hot asphalt can do significant damage to your pet's paws.

• Be mindful of your breed. Dog owners should recognize that certain dogs can handle the heat better than others. Short-nosed breeds have a harder time in extreme heat because their shorter airways don't allow as much time for the air they breathe in to cool as dogs with longer noses. In addition, the HSUS points out that dogs with white-colored ears are more susceptible to skin cancer than other dogs, making it imperative that owners of such dogs reduce their exposure to the sun on hot days when the UV index is especially dangerous.

• Let dogs inside. Doghouses might not be as prevalent as they once were, but many owners still keep doghouses in their backyards so their four-legged friends have a place to relax outdoors on lazy afternoons.

But doghouses can be similar to parked cars on especially hot days, making rising temperatures feel even hotter. Let dogs hang out inside in an air conditioned room on hot days to reduce their risk of heatstroke.

• Learn to recognize the signs of heatstroke. Pets suffering from heatstroke will exhibit certain symptoms, and pet owners who learn to recognize those symptoms can do something about them before it's too late.

Heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, excessive thirst, and lack of coordination are just a few potential indicators that a pet is suffering from heatstroke. Animals that are very old, very young, overweight, and unaccustomed to prolonged exercise, as well as those who have heart or respiratory conditions, are especially susceptible to heatstroke. Learn more about pets and heatstroke at www.humanesociety.org.

Extreme heat can be dangerous to pets, who often suffer in silence when dealing with the consequences of extreme heat. Pet owners who take certain precautions and learn to recognize signs of a pet struggling with heat can better protect their animals. **TBM**

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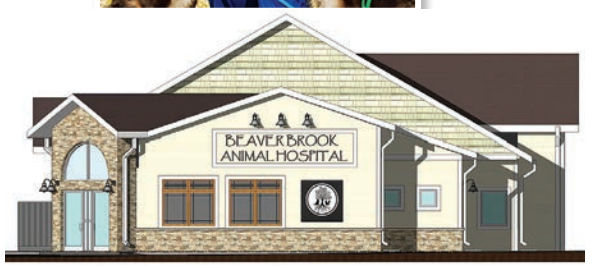

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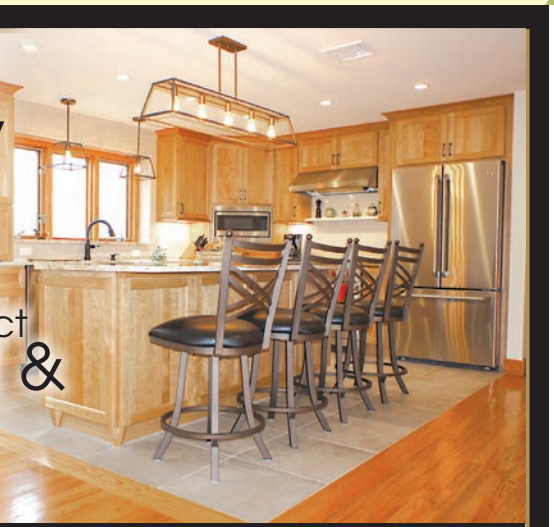

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Editorial

Can we have civil discourse in politics?

Much has been written and said the past few weeks about the terrible shooting incident at an Alexandria, Va., baseball field that left U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, a Republican from Louisiana and the House majority whip, seriously wounded.

Politicians on both sides of the aisle immediately spoke of the need to tone down the rhetoric and inject some civility in our political debates even as we passionately debate the issues. We've gone too far, they all said. Something has got to be done.

The reason we've gone too far is because too many Americans react emotionally rather than intellectually to political debate. Of course, that's exactly what the politicians want us to do. They don't want us to think, to weigh the arguments made by both sides, because we might end up opposing them.

It's all about winning so we certainly can't allow that to happen, now can we?

Better that we rant and rave and vilify anyone who disagrees with us. Our side is right and theirs is wrong, it's as simple as that. We shut our ears to anything but reinforcement of our preconceived positions and tune our televisions and radios to stations and programs that support our views.

They don't call it "rant radio" for nothing. And how about all of those mind-numbing political discussion shows on 24-hour cable news channels?

All they do is repeat the same political nonsense ad nauseam and then have a panel of alleged experts tell us that either the liberal or conservative position is the correct one, depending on the channel or station.

God forbid they actually go out and cover the rest of the news. It's much more fun to talk politics and get people all riled up.

When U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona was shot in a similar public incident six years ago, Democrats and Republicans alike sprinted to the nearest cameras and microphones on Capitol Hill to proclaim their horror.

They called for more civility in our political debate, less vitriolic rhetoric, a coming together of both parties in a sense of friendship and respect. Something had to be done to make things better.

That lasted a couple of weeks. Then they returned to their old divisive, hot-tempered, insulting and stiff-necked ways. They can't help themselves. It's the only way they know to engage the American people in the debate.

It would be nice if something good came out of this second shooting of a member of Congress in six years. But it won't. Because that would require all of us to listen to opposing viewpoints, engage our brains, and show a little respect to the other side of the debate. **CL**

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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL
Abigail Albair, Executive Editor
aalbair@turleyct.com
Mark Jahne, Editor
John Fitts, Assistant Editor
Alicia B. Smith, Associate Editor

STAFF WRITERS
Allie Rivera, Mara Dresner,
David Heuschkel, Sloan Brewster

ADVERTISING SALES
Alana DiMarco
alana@turleyct.com,
860-264-5723

PAGE DESIGNERS
Daniel Kornegay, Cynthia Martel,
Robert Sirois

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT
Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523
Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant
Daniel Kornegay, Corley Fleming, Cynthia Martel,
Kathy Kokoszka, Mary Grimes

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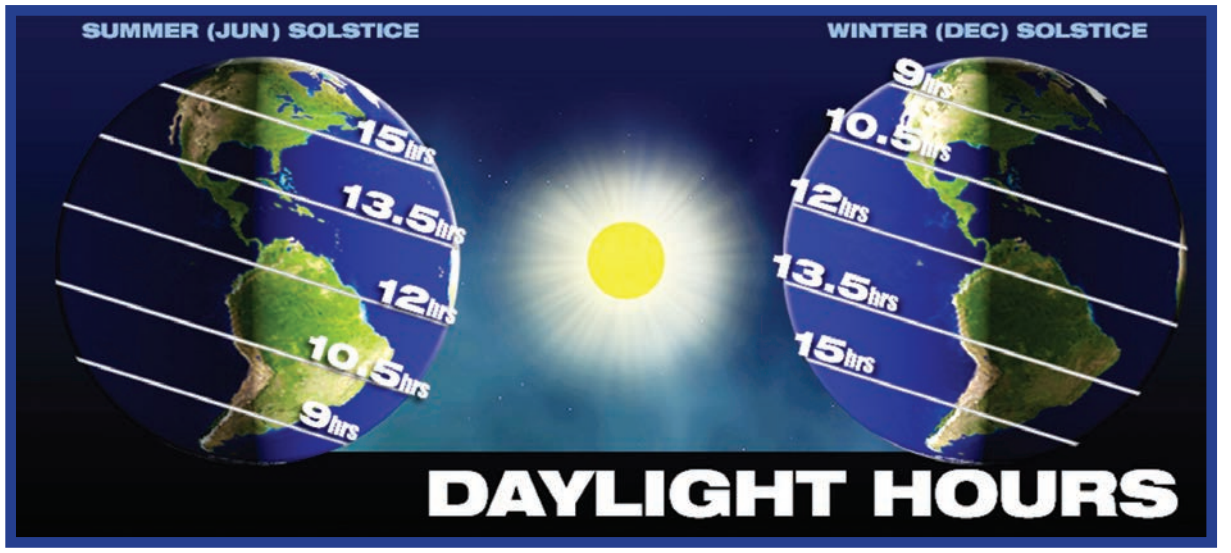


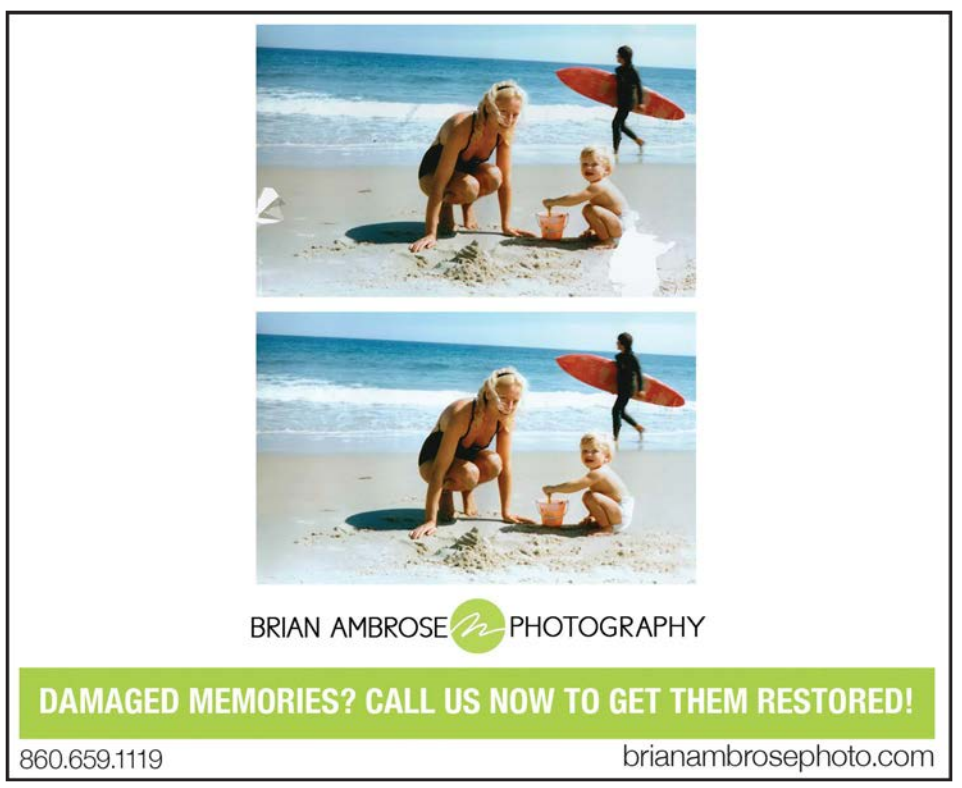
Savor/Enjoy the Daylight

First, let me just say that I hope everyone reading this article is having a great summer! Speaking of "summer" ...while the "meteorological" season started on June 1st, the "astronomical" season officially kicked off on June 21st (with the solstice). On this date, there is the greatest amount of possible daylight of the year, 15 hours and 14 minutes to be exact.

On a bright day here in Connecticut during the summertime, many like to get out and enjoy the sunshine – if it's heading to area beaches, a local pool, or a golf course (etc). So, you'll certainly want to savor each and every minute, since every day past the solstice, as we head toward autumn (and later winter), we lose daylight. But how much?

In this month alone, the loss of daylight is 45 minutes! On July 1st, the sunrise is at 5:19 a.m. and then sets at 8:30 p.m. By the end of the month, the sunrise shifts to 5:44 a.m. and then sets 20 minutes earlier, at 8:10 p.m.

So while this article may offer up somewhat depressing news, get out there and have fun ...as we head toward the Autumnal Equinox (on September 22nd), we will lose another 2 hours and 17 minutes. By the winter solstice, our total possible daylight dwindles to 9 hours and 7 minutes! CL



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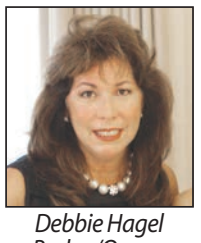
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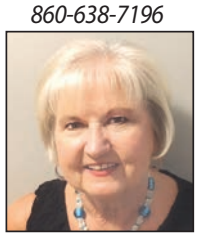
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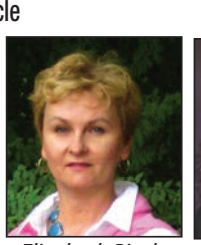
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